



City of Seattle

Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board



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March 23, 2012

Fred Wilhelm, PMP
Project Manager, Sound Transit
Design, Engineering and Construction Management (DECM)

Dear Mr. Wilhelm,

Thank you for your presentation to the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board on January 4, 2012 regarding the Sound Transit Link light rail Northgate Station area plan. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the station area plan as it relates to bicycle access to and from the station.

Northgate is a designated Regional Growth Center and the light rail station will be essential for the regional mobility of Seattle residents, as well as those commuting into Seattle from surrounding communities. The Northgate Station is an opportunity to facilitate seamless multimodal trips into and out of Seattle for years to come.

The station's proximity to I-5 and the Northgate Transit Center will be convenient for those arriving at the station by bus or car, but special attention should be considered to ensure that those arriving by bicycle feel safe riding in a congested area and that the connections to the station and surrounding bike routes are convenient.

As such, this letter further details SBAB's January 2012 recommendations to facilitate safe and convenient bicycle access to and from the station. We believe a proactive approach by Sound Transit to encourage better station connections is in the agency's best interest as it will attract more ridership to North Link. Similarly, the Federal Transit Administration's August 19, 2011 Final Policy Statement on the Eligibility of Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Under Federal Transit Law posted in the Federal Register underscored this direct relationship by noting that, "all bicycle improvements located within three miles of a public transportation stop or station shall have a *de facto* physical and functional relationship to public transportation."

We should also note that while we see Sound Transit as a key actor responsible to facilitate bicycle access to the Northgate Station, we also are looking to the City of Seattle (both SDOT and DPD), as well as King County to play proactive roles in supporting and helping to coordinate station access for bicycles. Given that the station design is approaching 60 percent completion, we recommend that any input and/or support by the partner agencies be given to Sound Transit as soon as possible.

With that in mind, SBAB's January 2012 recommendations are as follows:

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the city on matters related to bicycling, and the impacts which actions by the city may have upon bicycling; and shall have opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city's planning processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

-City Council
Resolution 25534

Accessing the station via bicycle

1st Ave NE

SBAB recommends construction of a bi-directional separated/protected bike facility (such as a cycle track) along the entire length of the east side of 1st Ave NE, from NE 92nd St to NE Northgate Way. NE 92nd St and NE Northgate Way are currently the only means of crossing over or under I-5 and 1st Ave NE will become an essential bicycle connection to and from the station once service begins.

Transit Center

SBAB recommends that bicycle riders en route to the Northgate Station should not be routed through parking lots or through the transit center bus loading/unloading zone area.

NE 103rd St and NE 100th St

SBAB recommends that on-street bicycle facilities (bike lanes, not sharrows) be constructed so that riders approaching the station from the northeast will either:

- Use NE 103rd St to 1st Ave NE and then use the crosswalk with special intersection design considerations to access station, OR
- Use NE 103rd St, 3rd Ave NE and then onto NE 100th St to access the station from the south.

Crossing I-5

SBAB strongly endorses the planned pedestrian/bicycle bridge over I-5 connecting with Northgate Station and recommends that all agencies involved in the station area planning seek additional funding for its construction.

5th Ave NE

SBAB suggests that any bicycling connections to the station that use 5th Ave NE should be evaluated for safety due to the volume of traffic, number of driveways and grades along this stretch of roadway.

Accessing the trains at the station

Bike Parking

While SBAB is satisfied with the quantity and location of the proposed bike parking, we recommend that bicycle riders be able to access the bike parking facilities directly without having to dismount and walk long distances to the designated parking areas, but should also be safe and coordinated with pedestrian movements.

Stairs to the Station Platform

SBAB requests that the emergency exit stairs on the south end be designed for more “public” use as it was suggested that bicycle riders would prefer to access the station platforms or ground levels by stairs not elevators. The current design shown would be difficult to use while handling a bike.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness and the challenges in creating a station that addresses the needs of all users. Please let us know if you have any questions about the above recommendations. We look forward to the next design review and further coordination with your design team.

Sincerely,

Max Hepp-Buchanan and Allegra Calder
Co-Chairs, Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board

Cc: Tom Rasmussen, Seattle City Council
Gordon Clowers, Seattle Department of Planning and Design
Peter Hahn, Seattle Department of Transportation
Kevin O'Neill, Seattle Department of Transportation
Kevin Desmond, King County Metro